

American Medicine

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In Advance

Sanitation and Tourists.—The summer exodus is already begun and large urban populations are betaking themselves to the seaside, the mountains, the rural sections and various other places claiming or alleging summer attractiveness. The problems of summer hotels, boarding houses, camps for boys and girls are not fully appreciated with relation to their potential affects upon the health of the visitors or of the communities to which they will return later.

A Maine Department of Health *Bulletin* points out the status of some of its hotels in a manner replete with suggestions. Only 8.7 per cent. were rated as excellent, 9.1 per cent. very good, 57.7 per cent. good, while 17.8 per cent. were rated as fair, and 6.7 per cent. were held to be poor. Sanitary condition was made the index of the rating and probably the results are as satisfactory as would be found by similar investigations in other state-wide investigations.

It is interesting to note the character of health regulations that were violated, which included food in kitchen exposed to dirt, dirty refrigerators, food and garbage exposed to flies, kitchen lacking screens, common towel for food handlers, common drinking cups, and, in a single instance, bed linen not adequately changed and in another hotel a sewage overflow to the street. The relation of these violations to personal comfort, cleanliness and health are too obvious to require discussion. The carefulness of

the Health Department in granting certificates is evidenced by the fact that while there were sixty violations filed because of a lack of water analysis, certification demanded this sanitary provision to be complied with.

In the state under question the two hundred and fifty-three hotels visited had accommodations for more than 24,000 persons and employed 2,200 males and 3,900 females. It was estimated that during 1919, 600,000 visitors went to the state and spent from twenty-seven million to thirty million dollars. The importance of the sanitary inspection is further emphasized because only about 30 per cent. of the hotels in the state had been inspected, while a study and inspection of camps had scarcely been begun. The necessity for safeguarding the health of summer visitors is apparent in the interest of the strangers within the gates and for the protection of the community in which they are sojourning, as well as for the further protection of the various states to which the tourists will return.

The long trail of diseases contracted in summer shelters indicates the importance of a more complete system of sanitary inspection and public health supervision than has thus far been attempted. The success of urban communities in moderating the burdens of summer illnesses demonstrates what may be accomplished thru modern public health work and should serve as the basis

significance of the present situation, and already large building enterprises are under way and are being planned. It remains now for the workers and the families of limited income to realize their chance. The municipal authorities would show excellent judgment if they would make the most of the situation and take the responsibility upon themselves of leading the slum-dwellers and tenement inhabitants out of their unhealthy homes and into the open spaces of the newly accessible tracts. Such a campaign of education is sure to meet with success at this time, in view of the low rents and the saving that such a change would involve. Both from the point of view of economy and health the opportunity is an attractive one. The enterprise of the builders, if fortified by the approval and interest of the city authorities, would go a long way toward a solution of the troublesome housing problem in the city.

Making the X-Ray Harmless.—Dr. Pesch, member of the University of Montpellier, has announced at a meeting of the French Academy of Sciences a discovery which he claims will eliminate the dangers to life and limb on the part of those working with X-rays. The discovery has won the approval of the members of the academy and is, like all true discoveries, very simple in its principle. Dr. Pesch found in his experiments that deep red rays are antagonistic to the ultra-violet ray, which produces skin-burns and certain oxidations. His discovery merely employs the red rays to counteract the influence of the violet rays and render them harmless. Thus by the simultaneous application of both rays, he secures immunity from the dangerous ones. Dr. Pesch has himself suffered from the use of the X-ray and he pursued his experiments in the hope that he might save his fellow-physicians from suffering as he has. As early as 1872 Becquerel, in his study on phosphorescence, discovered the antagonism that existed between extreme rays of the spectrum. But it remained with Dr. Pesch to utilize this information successfully. The discovery will be welcomed by all scientists as a means of making an otherwise beneficial instrument safe for the use of men who have never been deterred by thoughts of danger. It is a reward merited by their courage.

Again the Interstitial Glands.—The interest in the transplantation of the so-called interstitial glands continues unabated, and



within the past month or so the newspapers have given liberal space to the work of a western surgeon, Dr. J. R. Brinkley, who came all the way from Kansas to show New York surgeons how to make the "transfer" from goats to human beings. The newspaper accounts of the operation did not state whether Dr. Brinkley brought any goats with him, but they did record that in one case, at least, the goat that was called on for the necessary glands was obtained from the Zoo at a nominal cost of \$40.00. It is not impossible that the person who was the recipient in the operation described was, therefore, acquainted with this particular goat, and had determined certain virtues in his character, developed from his New York environment, that seemed especially desirable, if they could be acquired for only \$40.00 and the cost of a comparatively simple surgical operation. At any rate, the operation, according to report, was highly successful and the patient was expected to be able soon to "gambol on the green," with all the agility and debonair spirit of the noble animal, "who died that he might live."

We have often wondered where the expression "getting a man's goat" came from. If it is true, as the interstitial gland specialists are said to claim, that "there is a goat for every man," it is easy to understand the chagrin and annoyance that are sure to follow any attempt to appropriate or purloin any man's goat, even tho it is not an Angora, but of the ordinary garden or Zoo variety.

Another scientist, Dr. Victor D. Lespinasse of Northwestern University, has been conducting, according to newspaper report, certain experiments with the lower animals which have brought some very startling results that, to say the least, admit of far-reaching deductions.

His latest "stunt" is the transplantation of the interstitial glands of a rooster to a hen. "The results were surprising," he is quoted as saying, "and perhaps no one was more

surprised than the hen herself. Within a few weeks she began to develop all the characteristics of a chanticleer. She grew a comb and wattles. Saddle feathers appeared and finally a pair of spurs."

Dr. Lespinasse is now said to be experimenting with the interstitial glands of pigs. If he carries these experiments to the point of transferring the glands of the hog to human beings we fear the outcome. There are already too many people who seem possessed of certain porcine traits and if science is going to add to these in any way it will have much to answer for. How much better will it be, if the transplantation of interstitial glands is going to become a common custom, to select some other animal, as, for instance, the camel, a beast whose reputed qualifications in respect to withstanding thirst, would seem to promise much needed help to many sad and stricken individuals in meeting the arid times upon which the country has recently fallen.

Birth Control and the Physician.—

It has often been charged by the advocates of birth control that physicians as a class are woefully ignorant of the humanitarian significance of the movement and that they are stubbornly and unreasonably hostile to it. That, we believe, is an exaggeration. It is true, however, that physicians have shown great caution in their response to the birth control movement, but this caution was in no small measure justified by the very plain language of the law—at least language which was very plain until recently. Even the physician who was friendly to the movement could not give either his name or his aid to it without danger of coming within the scope of the law. Section 1142 of the Penal Code is explicit in its restrictions. It makes it a misdemeanor for a person "to sell, or give away, or to advertise or offer for sale any instrument or article, drug or medicine, for the prevention of conception; or to give information orally, stating when, where or how such an instrument, article or medicine can be purchased or obtained." In view of this forbidding article, the caution shown by the average physician in dealing with the problem of birth control, however favorably he regarded the theory, is quite easy to comprehend. A recent

decision of the Court of Appeals of New York State, the highest court of the State is therefore of unique interest to the profession and is so revolutionary in the interpretation of Section 1142 that we feel obligated to bring it to the attention of every physician. It is one of the most significant court rulings in medical law in recent years. The decision was given in the case of *Margaret Sanger vs. The People of the State of New York*. Mrs. Sanger was found guilty of giving contraceptive information and was sentenced to thirty days' imprisonment. During the trial, the court waived aside all pleas on humanitarian grounds with the statement that such pleas should be directed to the legislative branch of the government, the duty of the Court being merely to interpret the law as it stood. This law had been violated and the defendant was found guilty. In her defence, Mrs. Sanger therefore laid stress on her activities in so far as they were directed to prevent women who were diseased or feeble-minded or otherwise so unfitted for motherhood that the State would suffer by their bringing children into the world. She pointed out that she had given contraceptive information either to save the life of an expectant mother or to save the community from being burdened with diseased or unfit offspring. It was on this activity that the Court pronounced judgment. The decision points to the fact that Mrs. Sanger is not a physician and therefore cannot, as she did, plead the unconstitutionality of the law. "The general rule," said the Court, "applies in a criminal as well as a civil case that no one can plead the unconstitutionality of a law except the person affected thereby." Then followed the ruling which is of such great significance to physicians. "By Section 1145 of the Penal Law, *physicians are excepted from the provisions of this act under circumstances therein mentioned. This section reads 'An article or instrument used or applied by physicians lawfully practicing, or by their direction or prescription, for the cure or prevention of disease, is not an article of indecent or immoral nature or use, within this article. The supplying of such article by such physicians or by their direction or prescription, is not an offense under this article.'* This article is broad enough to protect the physician who in